

VOLUME ONE

\$6.00

BETTY PAGE



*Private
Peeks*

FOR SALE TO ADULTS ONLY

BETTE PAGE

THIS IS MAH CHANCE FO' A **NEW** CAREER! AH'M TIR'D O' TH' **OLE** BETTE PAGE!



ANSWERED PRAYERS FOR OVER-THIRTIES:

Private Peeks at Betty Page

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION



I recently happened to remark to a friend of mine, every so slightly my junior, that so-and-so reminded me somewhat of Betty Page. "Who?" "Betty Page," I repeated, though I hardly felt that a name like Betty Page required repetition. "Who the hell is Betty Page?" For an instant I flashed Put-on: WHO IS BETTY PAGE, INDEED??? Why, that's like saying who is Jimmy Piersall or who is Johnny Ray or even who is Evelyn "Treasure Chest" West, for Christ's sake! But the truth of the matter, I sadly reflected, is that it HAS been a full decade and a half since she so mysteriously took her leave of us. A *very* full decade and a half, I might add. And so I was forced to forgive my callow Under-Thirty and, with a sigh, faced up to the fact that I was, perhaps, getting on. I do not look it, of course, but I am. And as long as I am in a fact-facing mood, I might just as well admit that there might be readers of this little introduction who might also ask: WHO IS BETTY PAGE? Well, to be expedient, Betty Page was the undisputed and nearly sacrosanct Princess of the Pin-Up and Queen of Bondage in the 1950's. So that to a generation of us, anyhow, the completely uncovered Betty Page is, well, Answered Prayers indeed. From the late 1940's until her very abrupt and unexpected departure from New York in the early 60's, Betty Page was the most photographed, most sought-after and most fantasied-over model in her highly competitive field. There were surely millions of photos taken of her and utilized in magazines, calendars, pamphlets, "strip-sets" (remember?), films, and that voluminous range of High Heel and Bondage Production by Irving Klaw that eventually served as her major identity vehicle. And, to be sure, a certain degree of "under-the-counter" exposure as well, things being what they were. Betty Page was, in a word, ubiquitous. At one time or another she appeared in every major (and not-so-major) men's magazine and she was photographed by all of the leading pin-up and cheesecake photographers. And her following, who were unusually faithful during the time of her reign, metamorphosed into an absolute cult after her "retirement." To this day they collect and trade her photos and

swap, as well, the myriad rumors of her existence and disappearance, speculating endlessly. A disappearance, I might suggest, at the very height of her popularity and success.

Now, the uninitiated might well wonder just what prompts this kind of feverish adoration, just what it was that made Betty Page so very special? What can one say except that Betty Page was *perfect*. Perfect how? Her physical components taken separately were not particularly staggering. At slightly over five feet her charms were not in the same league with leggy, amazonian Irish McCalla. Nor did she exude that robust, out-of-door sexiness that was very much the province of Diane Webber, the highly photographed "edge-of-the-sea" lady. On the contrary, Betty Page was a distinctly "in-door" sort of model. Her particular brand of sex appeal was always far more potent when pictured within four walls, preferably with furniture at hand. And, though she achieved her popularity during a rather "tit-oriented" time, she was not really overly busty. One might even run the risk of suggesting that she seemed relatively flat-chested when compared to the Lachaise-like charms of ladies such as Tempest Storm and Evelyn West and even more bovine types like Cherry Knight, Dolores DuVaughn and Busty Brown. Nor did Betty Page offer the incredible animal heat that one got from the likes of Lilly Christine, she of the "Cat-Girl" fame. But as a package, a totality, the sum of all her parts, oh my, Betty Page was, how-you-say, Something Else. Her figure was superbly proportioned; and in high heels and stockings, from the waist down, she was akin to the Colossus of Rhodes or the Hanging Gardens of Babylon—a veritable Wonder of the World. And her hair style, which was later copied by a bevy of other models, lent an air of formality and discipline to a face that was otherwise bright and fresh and rather innocent. She was a paradox: the Tennessee farm girl (which she was) trapped in the urban maze and responding in a manner of totally unpredictable sexuality that made most other models of her ilk look like down-at-the-high-heels chorus bimboes, stranded in Baghdad-on-the-Hudson when burlesque split for the balmy clime of New Jersey. For all the heavy-duty, "shtarker" trappings of the Klaw netherworld, Miss Betty Page remained unbelievably . . . believable.



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A bit of history is in order. She came to New York in the late post-war years and began to get regular work as a model immediately, though her persona was certainly far from fully developed. By the early 50's, she was appearing in Bob Harrison's fetish mags, WINK, FLIRT, TITTER, and BEAUTY PARADE. By 1953 she had become the prize model in Irving Klaw's very formidable stable, and she was well ensconced into the genre that catapulted her into legend. From the outset, it was clear that Betty Page was the quintessential, the absolute bondage model. She was, in turn, vulnerable and responsive to what we might call the "darker urges," and her countenance was photogenic in the extreme. She defined, once and for all, the classic S-M Heroine. So much so, that Art took to imitating Life, as it so often does, and the Ladies-in-Distress of such illustrators as Gene Bilbrew, Eric Stanton and even the fabled John Willie began to emulate Betty Page. The response to her work for Klaw was so overwhelming that he eventually produced an entire album, BETTY PAGE IN BONDAGE, which was followed by six others in the series. All seven remain in print to this day, genuine testimony to her undying appeal.

Over the decade that Betty Page worked for Klaw, her popularity never waned. She was the ultimate Queen of Bondage. The still photographs and the films that were made of Betty under the Klaw auspices ran into the thousands, and they are highly collectible today. Most of them, however, remain permanently in the archives of graying aficionados. It is interesting to note that none of Klaw's output was in the least pornographic as we define that term today, nor did the pictures and films contain the slightest nudity. All were in the severe stylings of the S-M melodrama. Her nude modeling certainly formed another facet of her commercial appeal, but insofar as the Klaw catalog is concerned, the standard bondage garb was used exclusively: corsets, garter-belts, varied lingerie and the ever-present stockings and high heels. (When Klaw was finally busted in the late 50's, it was for precisely this sort of material and nothing heavier. Such was life in the 50's, chillun'.)

During her hey-day, Betty Page was naturally very much in demand for "personal" shooting sessions

which produced pictures intended solely for private use and obviously unsuited for commercial application at the time. A great many photographs of this nature, taken from private collections and previously unpublished, are included in the present volume. One must recall that it was absolutely verboten to exhibit pubic hair, to say nothing of any stronger gestures. Some time during the last few years of the 50's, a set of rather overt "beaver" photos, almost certainly intended for private purposes only, were pirated and distributed to "under-the-counter" clientele. Consequently, these pictures were relatively widely known and the result was predictable: a good deal of notoriety for Miss Page, although the pictures are almost demure by today's standards. Many Betty Page enthusiasts attribute this situation to her abrupt departure and the termination of her modeling career. Problematical as it is to speculate upon such matters with no word from Betty Page on the issue, there is a strain of undeniable logic about the supposition. Her disappearance was utterly complete and successful; and while it is reasonably certain that she is alive and well somewhere in the southern United States, she has consented to absolutely no interviews up until the present time and has permitted no pictures to be taken of herself—in the past decade, at least. A rather rampant rumor, which might well be true, attributes her present desire for anonymity to a strong religious commitment, but this is still in the realm of conjecture without her certification.

The photographs in this volume attempt to present a cross-current of Betty Page's career, both public and private. Again, it should be stressed that almost all of the private pictures have never been published before and most of them are "one-of-a-kind" pictures. For those readers who recall Betty Page fondly from Yesterday, they are bound to have a very, very special appeal and for those previously unfamiliar with her, here then are some rare Private Peeks at one of the most exciting women to ever appear before a camera.

RICHARD MERKIN











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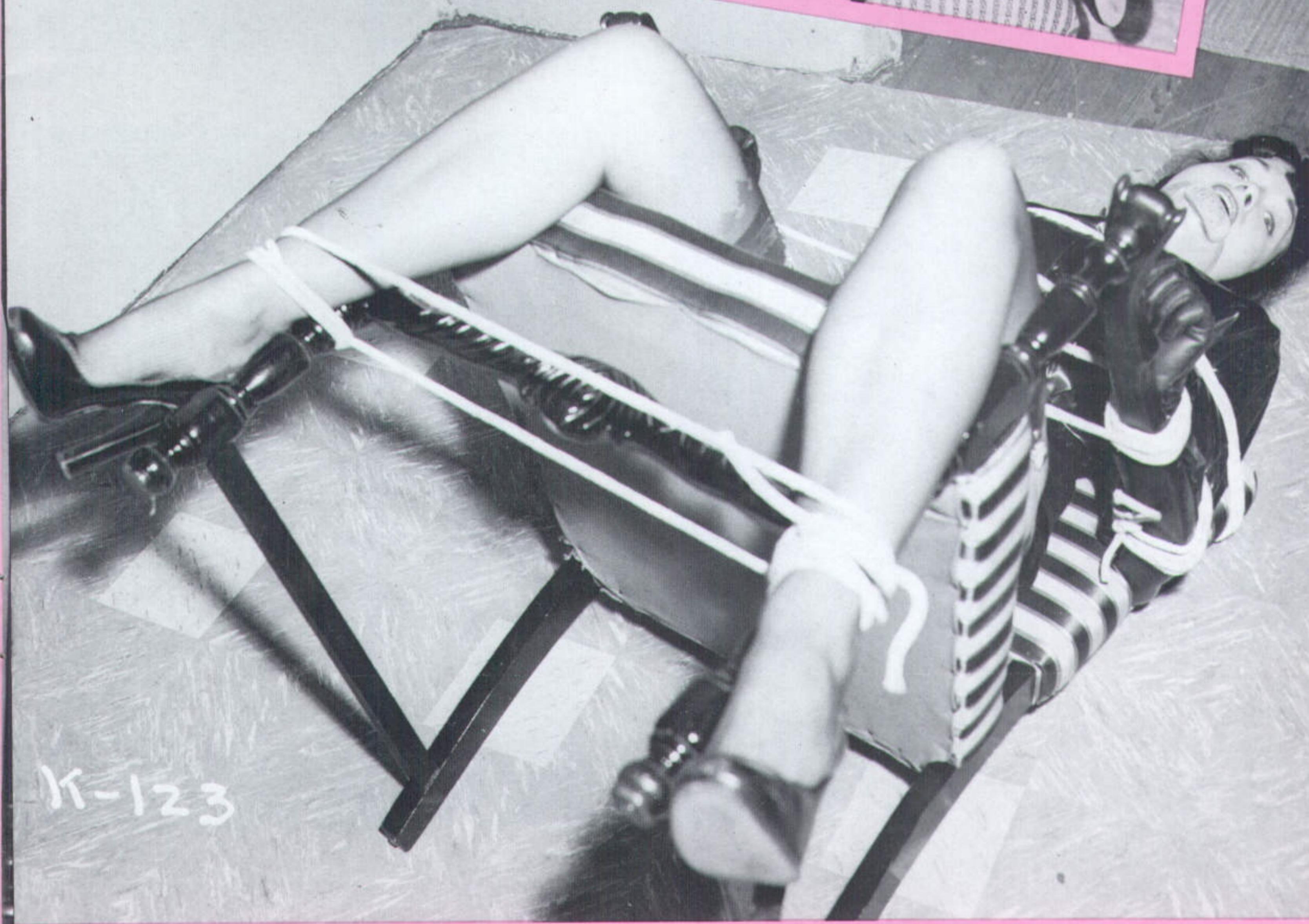




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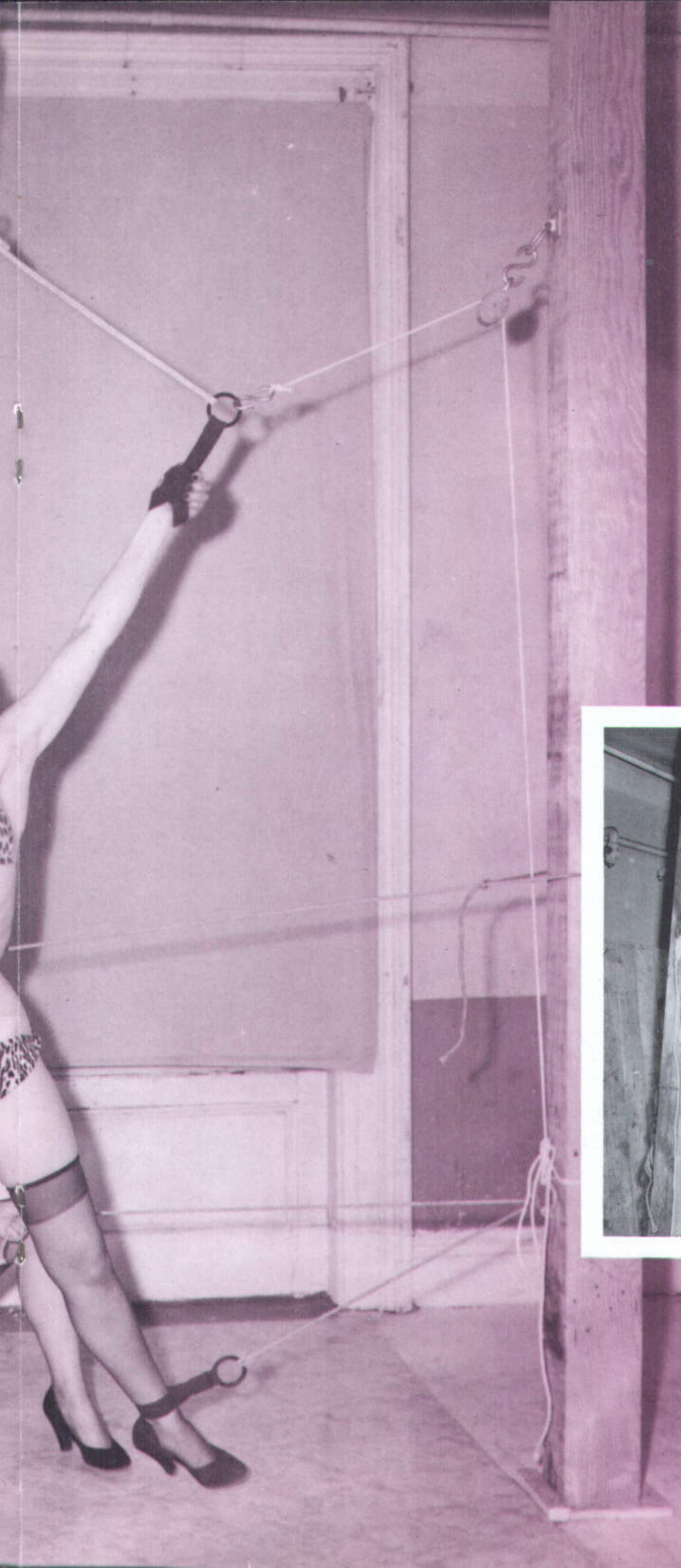


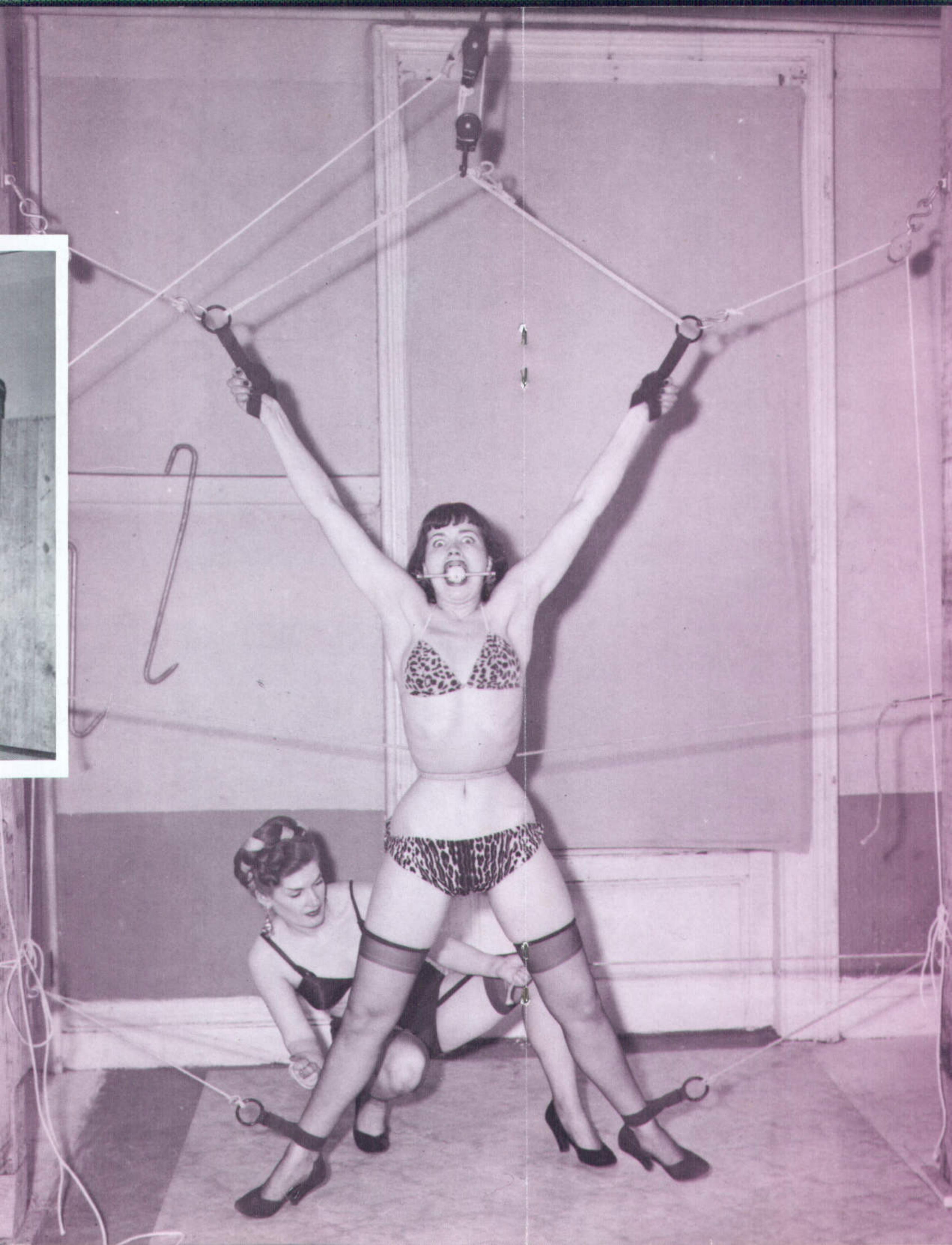
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